

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05410 211213Z

ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6514

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 5410

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, EAGR, SOCI, UR

SUBJECT: FOOD SUPPLIES IN YEREVAN, TBILISI, BAKU

1. GENERAL. IN COMPARISON WITH MOSCOW, THE THREE TRANS-CAUCASIAN REPUBLIC CAPITALS SEEMED WELL SUPPLIED WITH BASIC FOODSTUFFS DURING THE WEEK OF APRIL 11. HOWEVER, WE WERE TOLD THAT MEAT WAS RELATIVELY SCARCE IN ALL THREE CITIES, PARTICULARLY BAKU. EXCELLENT QUALITY BREAD WAS IN ABUNDANCE IN THE THREE CAPITALS.

2. SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS. DURING THE FLIGHT FROM MOSCOW TO YEREVAN, EMBOFF OVERHEAD TWO SOVIET ARMENIANS REMARKING THAT THE FOOD SITUATION AROUND MOSCOW WAS MUCH WORSE THAN IN ARMENIA, AND THAT IN THE CENTRAL RSFSR RESIDENTS WERE SAYING THE FOOD SITUATION WAS AS GRIM AS DURING STALIN'S TIME. IN YEREVAN, A LOCAL RESIDENT SAID THE MEAT SUPPLY WAS "NOT TOO BAD," WITH FROZEN MEAT AVAILABLE THAN FRESH, AND SOME NEW ZEALAND MEAT ON SALE.

3. AT THE CENTRAL KOLKHOZ MARKET IN YEREVAN, MID-DAY MONDAY, APRIL 11:

-- LIMITED SUPPLIES OF FIRST QUALITY, FIRST SORT

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 05410 211213Z

BEEF AT 4 R/KILO;

-- NO CHICKEN, LAMB OR PORK;

-- VAST SUPPLIES OF FRESH FRUIT, INCLUDING APPLIES, ORANGES, PEARS, POMEGRANATES;

-- AMPLE SUPPLIES OF FRESH VEGETABLES, INCLUDING
GREEN BEANS, CABBAGE, CARROTS, ONIONS.

4. AT A DOWNTOWN STATE STORE AT MID-MORNING MONDAY,
APRIL 11:

--LIMITED SUPPLY OF FIRST QUALITY, FIRST SORT
BEEF AT 2 R/K;

-- AMPLE SUPPLY OF BOILED PORT AT 4.20 R/K;

-- AMPLE SUPPLIES OF VARIOUS SAUSAGES PRICES FROM
2.70 R/K TO 3.60 R/K;

-- VAST SUPPLY OF FRESH MILK IN PAPER CARTONS AND
BOTTLES;

-- AMPLE SUPPLY OF RADISHES, ONIONS, CUCUMBERS,
BUT NO FRESH FRUIT.

5. AT 9:30 A.M TUESDAY, APRIL 12, THE CENTRAL
KOLKHOZ MARKET IN TBILISI OFFERED:

-- LIMITED SUPPLY OF LAMB AT 2 R/K;

-- SMALL, SCRAWNY CHICKENS AT 6 R FVR ONE-THIRD
KILO;

-- LIMITED SUPPLY OF FIRST QUALITY BEEF AT 4 R/K
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 05410 211213Z

(SEVERAL STALLS WERE ALREADY EMPTY, AND LINES WERE
LONG);

-- GOOD SUPPLIES OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES,
ALTHOUGH NO CUCUMBERS OR TOMATOES WERE AVAILABLE.

A RETURN VISIT TO THE SAME MARKET AT 2.00 P.M. THAT
DAY DISCLOSED THAT ALL THE BEEF AND LAMB HAD BEEN
SOLD, AND THE SCRAWNY CHICKENS WERE STILL THERE.

6. INTOURIST GUIDE IN BAKU SAID THAT NO LAMB HAD
BEEN AVAILABLE IN THE CITY DURING THE LAST WEEK IN
MARCH -- "VERY SERIOUS FOR US," HE ADDED, BECAUSE
AZERBAIZHANI MEN FEEL THEY HAVE NOT HAD A MEAL UNLESS
LAMB IS SERVED. AT THE CENTRAL KOLKHOZ MARKET IN
BAKU, 11:30 A.M. FRIDAY, APRIL 15:

-- ALL THE MEAT STALLS WERE CLOSED;

-- A STATE STORE IN THE PREMISES OFFERED A LIMITED
SUPPLY OF FIRST QUALITY, FIRST SORT BEEF AT 2 R/K,
BUT NO LAMB OR PORK;

-- THE MARKET WAS FULL OF FRESH FRUIT AND FRESH
VEGATABLES.
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